(English version)

Question for written answer E-000653/25
to the Commission

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(12 February 2025)

Subject: Adoption of the ReFuelEU Aviation Act and the economic impact of mandatory minimum sustainable aviation fuel quotas in the air transport sector

The introduction of the obligation to use sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) at a rate of 2%, as mandated by the ReFuelEU Aviation Act ([1]), risks having severe consequences for the air transport sector and European citizens. According to authoritative sources ([2]), this regulation will inevitably increase airline costs, resulting in higher ticket prices and disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable population groups and regional economies.

Once again, the Commission appears to be disregarding the social and economic impact of its decisions, imposing measures that burden citizens and businesses without clear evidence of the promised environmental benefits. At a time marked by inflation, rising living costs and an energy crisis, it seems irresponsible to introduce new obligations without conducting adequate impact assessments and implementing concrete measures to prevent negative consequences.

In light of these concerns, can the Commission respond to the following questions:

1. On what basis did it impose the 2% SAF requirement without first ensuring that the resulting cost increase would not be entirely passed on to citizens and businesses?

2. What concrete measures does it intend to adopt to prevent this decision from leading to a further rise in airfares, penalising millions of European citizens, particularly those in remote and island regions, who are already disadvantaged in terms of connectivity?

Supporter ([3])

[1] [1]Regulation (EU) 2023/2405 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on ensuring a level playing field for sustainable air transport (ReFuelEU Aviation) (OJ L, 2023/2405, 31.10.2023, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2405/oj).

[2] [2]https://www.quotidiano.ilsole24ore.com/art.php?t=S24&e=SOLE&i=20250124&artid=1996955.

[3] [3]This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Julien Leonardelli (PfE)

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Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(1 April 2025)

1. ReFuelEU Aviation ([1]) was overwhelmingly supported by the European Parliament ([2]) and the Council ([3]). The Commission carried out an Impact Assessment before adopting the proposal which shows benefits through 250.000 net job creation and a new push for innovation and research ([4]). Fuel costs derived from the 2% minimum share of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) will increase costs for airlines over the short term as SAF are currently more expensive than kerosene. However, SAF prices are expected to mean an overall cost increase for airlines of around 1% by 2029. SAF prices are expected to go down from the current levels over the medium term easing the upward pressure on costs. The EU SAF market for biofuels is growing faster and higher than the minimum legal requirements in ReFuelEU Aviation. The SAF Allowances under the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), and other tools offer financial support for the production and uptake of SAF ([5]). This is allowing for the price increases to remain largely subdued over the short term. The increase in scale will lead to economies of scale, production efficiencies and industrial maturity that are expected to reduce the prices of SAF and consequently the relative price of blended SAF throughout the EU market.

2. 20 million EU ETS allowances worth around EUR 1.6 billion are supporting the decarbonisation by compensating for the price differential between SAF and kerosene in flights covered by the EU ETS. Other EU financial instruments are also supporting SAF production scale up such as the Innovation Fund and InvestEU. The Commission will present later in 2025 a Sustainable Transport Investment Plan as part of the Clean Industrial Deal ([6]) which will outline short and medium-term measures to further support SAF.

([1]) https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-modes/air/environment/refueleu-aviation_en
([2]) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230911IPR04913/70-of-jet-fuels-at-eu-airports-will-have-to-be-green-by-2050
([3]) https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/10/09/refueleu-aviation-initiative-council-adopts-new-law-to-decarbonise-the-aviation-sector/
([4]) https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12303-Sustainable-aviation-fuels-ReFuelEU-Aviation_en
([5]) https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-your-voice/news/adoption-eu-rules-ets-support-system-accelerate-use-sustainable-aviation-fuels-2025-02-06_en
([6]) https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/clean-industrial-deal_en